



BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT.



Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

1921.



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To the Bideford Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT OF
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1921.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you herewith my Annual Report for the year 1921 dealing with the Public Health and General Conditions of the District during the year.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

LEONARD B. BETTS, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (Lon).

Cleverdon House,
Bradworthy, N. Devon.

Annual Report.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	53,775 acres
Population	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5890
Number of Inhabited Houses (1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1501
Number of Families or separate occupiers (1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1450
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£30175 17s. 6d.
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...£125 14s. 7d.

2.—VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.—There were 117 births registered during the year—50 males and 67 females. Of these 3 were illegitimate.

Birthrate.—The birthrate per 1,000 of the population for 1921 is 19.8, which is a considerable drop from the rate of 1920 and is also below the average for the whole country. The birthrate for the whole of England and Wales is 22.4.

Deaths.—The total deaths during the year were 66—28 male and 38 female.

Deathrate.—The deathrate for the year 1921 is 11.2, which compares favourably with the deathrate of 12.1 for the whole of England and Wales.

Infantile Mortality.—There were five deaths of infants under one year of age. One of these was illegitimate.

The Infant Deathrate, per 1,000 births, for 1921 is 43.3 compared with 15.7 in 1920.

Deaths from causes incidental to Childbirth	...	...	...	...	2
Deaths from Measles	...	...	...	...	nil
Deaths from Whooping-Cough	...	...	...	...	nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	...	...	...	...	1

There has been no unusual or excessive mortality from any cause during the year.

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

DISEASE			No. cases notified	No. cases sent Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	...	...	17	nil	nil
Diphtheria	...	...	3	nil	nil
Pneumonia	...	...	5	nil	5
Malaria	...	...	2	nil	nil
Erysipelas	...	...	2	nil	nil
Puerperal Fever	...	...	2	nil	nil
Opthalmic Neoratorum	...	...	1	nil	nil
Tuberculosis :—					
Pulmonary	M.		3		
	F.		6		
	Total		9	3	3
Non-Pulmonary	M.		Nil		
	F.		Nil		1
	Total		Nil		

4.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS IN DISTRICT DURING 1921.

There was a mild outbreak of Chickenpox at Abbotsham in November. Measles was prevalent in Monkleigh, Putford, Buckland Brewer, and in Newton St. Petrock in November and the schools were closed for two weeks on that account. There were 17 cases of Scarlet Fever at Hartland, chiefly in school children and the Hartland Council School was closed for two weeks, during October on that account. The outbreak coincided with the shortage of water owing to the exceptionally dry season.—Newton St. Petrock School was also closed for two weeks, in February owing to the prevalence of Tonsilitis.

Influenza was prevalent in the district during the spring.

5.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS IN DISTRICT.

There are 4 Nurses, supported by various Nursing Associations, who visit cases of sickness. Three of these are midwives practising in the district.

Hospitals.—There are no hospitals in the district, but the Bideford and District Hospital is available for cases from the Rural District when required. This hospital is supported partly by voluntary contributions and partly by patients' fees.

A few beds are reserved in the Bideford Isolation Hospital for Infectious cases from Abbotsham. Tubercular patients are received, when practicable, in one or other of the Sanatoria—at Barnstaple, Hawkmoor, etc.

There is no accommodation for small-pox in or for the district.

The Clinic for Venereal Diseases, at Barnstaple, is available for cases from this District.

6.—LABORATORY WORK.

Diphtheria antitoxin is supplied by the County Council free of charge for use of poor patients. The County Laboratory is available for the examination of swabs for Diphtheria, sputum for Tubercle Bacilli, blood for Malarial Organisms and so forth. The Medical Men of the district make great use of these facilities.

7. SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Summary of Sanitary Work carried out in the district by the Sanitary Inspector, during 1921 :—

Visits to dwelling houses and other premises	...	...	...	625
Houses disinfected	...	...	...	31
Schools disinfected	...	...	...	1
Notices served re nuisances dangerous to public health	...	...	...	15
Old Wells cleaned out and protected	...	...	...	6
New wells sunk...	...	...	...	9
New earth closets erected	...	...	...	5
Old privies re-constructed	...	...	...	3
New water closets built	...	...	...	3
New sets of drains constructed	...	...	...	9
Old drains re-constructed and repaired	...	...	...	6
Samples of water taken for analysis	...	...	...	12
Houses renovated	...	...	...	6
Sets of Plans passed for the erection of houses, huts and added wings	...	...	...	5
Houses erected	...	...	...	11
Huts erected	...	...	...	2
Wings added	...	...	...	2
Case of overcrowding	...	...	...	1

There are 11 registered dairies, 11 slaughter houses and 2 steam bakeries. All have been regularly inspected and are clean and well-kept.

The septic tanks at Abbotsham, Buckleigh, Buckland Brewer, Hartland, Parkham, and Woolsery have been cleaned out.

Water.—Twelve samples of water were chemically examined during the year. Nine were found fit for drinking purposes and three unfit. In one of the latter cases, the water was full of iron salts due to rusty iron pipes and it was recommended that lead pipes be substituted.

The water was very scarce during the summer months and many wells became very low and muddy in consequence.

Rainfall. The total rainfall for the year as registered at Melbury Reservoir was 38.485 inches. This is very much below the average, which is about 52 inches, and is the lowest on record for many years. It presents great contrast to the preceding year, when the rainfall was exceptionally high—65.44 inches.

8.—PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

(1).—The Medical Officer of Health ((Part time).

(2).—The Sanitary Inspector (Full time).

9.—HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
(b) As part of a municipal housing scheme	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6

1.—UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES—

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)

(2).—Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 48

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation None

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation None

2.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers 11

3.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS—

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning etc., Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit :—

(a) by owners

(b) by Local Authorities in default of owners

(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close.

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied Nil

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied Nil

(a) by owners

(b) by Local Authorities in default of owners

C.—Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders Nil

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made Nil

(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit Nil

(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made Nil

(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders... .. Nil

